

As the city's first African American mayor, Mayor Willie L. Brown, Jr. continues to represent the past, present and future of civil rights and the cultural and intellectual diversity that symbolizes San Francisco's history of acceptance.

Mayor Brown has been a mentor and a friend since the early 1970's. He has been consistent in championing the rights and the plight of those shut out of the American dream, and he has never forgotten his humble roots in Mineola, Texas.

I had the privilege to serve with Mayor Brown while in the California Legislature. As speaker of the Assembly, Mayor Brown led our state through many challenging years. He was my "shadow Governor" and made sure that communities of color, women and the poor had a seat at the table.

As a skilled legislator, Speaker Brown guided me with my very aggressive and successful legislative agenda, which I continue to embrace with pride and humility.

Mayor Brown leads with his head and his heart. His intellect, his wisdom and his spirit is something to behold.

As one whose life and work has been enriched by this giant of a man, I say thank you, and Godspeed. Enjoy this next glorious chapter of your life.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ROB PORTMAN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 21, 2003

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. Speaker, on November 20, 2003, I was unavoidably detained and missed the vote on Roll Call Number 654 on H.R. 1828, the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act of 2003.

Had I been present, I would have voted "Yes."

RECOGNIZING WORLD AIDS DAY

HON. HILDA L. SOLIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 21, 2003

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize December 1, 2003, as World AIDS Day. On this day, many around the globe will celebrate the progress made in the battle against AIDS while raising awareness to the challenges that remain.

Worldwide, an estimated 42 million people are living with the disease; 11.8 million are young people aged 15 to 24. Furthermore, more than half of those newly infected with HIV are between 15 and 24 years old—six thousand new infections each day, or 4 every minute.

In Latin America, in 2001, approximately 130,000 adults and children were infected with HIV and 80,000 died of AIDS. Unfortunately, young people and women are becoming increasingly vulnerable.

As we recognize World AIDS Day and celebrate the successes achieved, let us remember that our young people are at the center of this global crisis. They are our greatest hope in fighting this deadly disease and we should

do all we can to deliver effective treatments and prevent new infections.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 21, 2003

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained in my district had I been present, I would have voted yea on the following roll call votes:

Roll Call 650 (H.R. 1), Medicare Prescription Drug and Modernization Act—On Motion to Instruct Conferees;

Roll Call 651 (H.R. 2660), Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2004—On Motion to Instruct Conferees;

Roll Call 652 (H.J. Res. 63), Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2003;

Roll Call 653 (H. Con. Res. 209) Commending the signing of the United States-Adriatic Charter, a charter of partnership among the United States, Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia;

Roll Call 654 (H.R. 1828), the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act of 2003; and

Roll Call 655 (H.R. 253), National Flood Insurance Reauthorization.

AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK

HON. CIRO D. RODRIGUEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 21, 2003

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, this week marks the 82nd annual celebration of American Education Week, a time for us to acknowledge and praise the important role of education for our social and economic future. In the United States, the public school system provides the backbone of our youth's education, a system that deserves our active support and continued respect.

In 1919 the American Legion and the National Education Association joined together in concern over illiteracy rates among World War I draftees. The two groups agreed to support a national effort to increase awareness of the importance of education. The first American Education Week was observed from December 4–10, 1921. In many parts of our state, literacy remains a great challenge, and the need for a strong public education system is more important than ever.

Each year American Education Week focuses on a different issue; this year's theme is "Great Public Schools for Every Child—America's Promise." The week's co-sponsors include the United States Department of Education, National PTA, and various national educator associations.

Every child deserves the opportunity to attend a quality public school where he or she can learn and excel in a safe, stable environment. Students should receive an education that teaches not only practical skills and specific knowledge, but that also passes down our nation's core values. Public schools nurture American traditions such as tolerance, free-

dom, and equality that create productive citizens.

Public schools in Texas continue to show great progress in many areas. According to statistics compiled by the NEA, Texas ranks in the top ten states for 4th graders scoring well in math tests. More and more Texas schools are offering advanced placement courses, and Texas now ranks first in the nation for the proportion of students taking advanced math courses. Texas stands among the top four states nationally for the percentage of public primary schools offering foreign language immersion. Excellence in math and language are not only important personal education skills, but they are critical to our future economic growth.

At the same time, challenges remain. The Administration and the Congress have failed to make the financial investments needed to expand the areas of progress and provide the quality education needed by all of America's children. Elementary schools in Texas are overcrowded and many are desperately in need of major repairs. Quality teachers, our most valuable educational resources, are becoming more and more difficult to recruit and retain.

Despite the promise to leave no child behind, the current federal leadership has adopted policies that break the commitments to reform and accountability in the No Child Left Behind Act. Rural and inner city schools will suffer the most, as will children with special needs and challenges. The President's budget and congressional appropriations are underfunding the No Child Left Behind Act by as much as \$8 billion. Similarly, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) remains woefully underfunded, leaving states and school districts with the burden of complying with the important federal goal of providing a public education to all students.

This lack of funding contributes directly to the problems facing Texas schools and schools across the Nation: larger classes, schools closing earlier, cutting out after school and summer programs, and laying off teachers and staff. What is the response to this starvation diet by the Administration and congressional leaders? Private school vouchers . . . Blame the public schools for meeting standards without providing resources to comply . . . Failure to make the commitment to provide all students, of all backgrounds and needs, with the education they deserve and we as a society need.

The best investment in America's future is an investment in our children's education. We should take this week to give special attention to promoting quality in our nation's public schools; however, our vigilance should not end this week, but continue until every child has the chance to realize his or her educational potential.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO LARRY CORNMAN, ROBERT SHARMAN, AND PAUL POLAK

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 21, 2003

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today to pay tribute to three